

Rep. Wilson Votes to Restore Competition & Fairness in Health Insurance Marketplace

Washington, DC - Today, Rep. Charlie Wilson (OH-6) voted to ensure that American consumers get a real choice and a fair deal when purchasing health insurance. The Health Insurance Industry Fair Competition Act will take away the anti-trust exemption for health insurance companies, requiring them to compete fairly and adhere to the same anti-trust laws as other companies.

"For reasons that don't make any sense, only the health insurance industry and Major League Baseball are exempt from anti-trust laws. That's just crazy! Our health care isn't a game. It's time we stopped catering to the insurance industry and instead cared for American families who need more choice and better care at lower costs," Wilson said.

For 65 years, the health insurance industry has been legally exempt from anti-trust laws, and the federal government was banned from even investigating evidence of possible collusion. In the last 14 years alone, there have been 400 mergers among health insurers and now 94% of all insurance markets are "highly concentrated" - meaning consumers have little or no choice between insurance providers.

Health insurers that were previously exempt from anti-trust laws will now bear legal responsibility for price fixing, dividing up territories among themselves and sabotaging their competitors in order to gain a monopoly in the marketplace. Such practices have been outlawed in other industries for decades.

"Competition helps drive down costs and it creates more choice. Not only do families in Ohio need this, our economy needs this," Wilson said.

The legislation is supported by numerous groups including the American Hospital Association, American Nurses Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, Consumers Union, Consumer Federation of America, Center for Justice and Democracy, and U.S. PIRG.

The bill now moves to the Senate for consideration.